

The Council for Labor & Economic Growth

Ensuring No Worker is Left Behind



CLEG e-newsletter March 2008

Council for Labor & Economic Growth Launches Monthly e-newsletter

Welcome to the first edition of the e-newsletter for CLEG Members, staff and interested individuals. In this issue, you will find updates from each of the CLEG committees, as well as more detailed information on several initiatives already underway.

Look for future issues to contain in-depth articles on the work undertaken by the Council and its members. We welcome your comments, critiques and suggestions to deliver information that is most relevant and helpful to our members.

Michigan Makes Progress on a National Career Readiness Certificate Recommendation

In December 2007, CLEG recommended the adoption of the ACT WorkKeys-based National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) as the preferred tool for a statewide work readiness credential. The recommendation was based on information and research presented by the Council for Labor & Economic Growth's combined Increasing Educational Attainment and Accelerating Re-employment committees. Those committees are chaired by Michael Schmidt, contributions director, education for the Ford Motor Company Fund, and Matt Chambers, CEO of Three Rivers Health, respectively.

The committees' staff conducted extensive research and outreach to gather information for their reports. One of the sources was the work previously conducted in several states around the country. CLEG staff spoke with peers in Arkansas, Colorado, Indiana, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma and Pennsylvania. The committees also surveyed both employers and Michigan Works! Association representatives to determine the demand and current use of workforce assessments across the state.

Based on the business community's prioritization of soft skills and the consensus that a "tool box" approach would give Michigan the most responsive and flexible opportunity to meet a host of stakeholders' needs, they also recommended supplementing the NCRC with soft skills training and, where appropriate, the use of the job placement tool JobFit, by Profiles International.

In response to the December 2007 recommendation, the Department of Labor & Economic Growth (DLEG) has convened a MI NCRC Implementation Workgroup comprised of representatives from CLEG, DLEG, the Michigan Department of Education, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), the Michigan Works! Association and Michigan Works! Agencies, community colleges, intermediate school districts, Michigan's WIRED regions, organized labor, and employers.

This group has begun mapping out Michigan's existing NCRC and WorkKeys infrastructure and the preferred future for a statewide system to develop a realistic cost estimate for the proposal and suggestions for using existing funding to support the recommendation. CLEG staff overseeing the workgroup engagement are energized by a consensus approach and belief that a well-framed implementation plan will:

- Help assure employers that job seekers possess skills needed to match job requirements
- Give workers a way to show employers they have certified skills as well as opportunities to improve skills using available remediation tools
- Align the Michigan Merit Exam for high school students with workforce assessments across the state
- Build on existing collaborations among organizations in several areas of the state already employing ACT WorkKeys
- Establish a database that tracks the skill levels of the Michigan workforce and can be used both as an economic development tool and as a baseline to make improvements in training opportunities

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**CLEG Membership
List**

By June 2008, the group intends to develop an implementation plan for Council approval that reflects cost considerations and best opportunities to build off the existing infrastructure and momentum and aligns state strategies in workforce development, education and economic development.

Many of the states the committee interviewed are a continuing source of information as the workgroup addresses challenging questions about implementation and funding for a credentialing system in Michigan. For more information on what is happening with ACT WorkKeys in Michigan and statewide credentials in other states, see the following links:

Michigan NCRC Advocates: <http://www.michigancrc.org/default.aspx>

Arkansas: <http://www.state.ar.us/esd/crc.htm>

Georgia: <http://www.gaworkready.org>

Missouri: <http://www.ded.mo.gov/crc>

North Carolina: <http://www.crcnc.org/info/AboutCRC.aspx>

Oklahoma: <http://www.okcommerce.gov/workkeys>

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CLEG's Low-Wage Worker Advancement Committee forms Adult Learning Workgroup

The CLEG Low-Wage Worker Advancement Committee (LWWAC), chaired by Mitch Tomlinson, CEO of Peckham, Inc., has begun a year-long effort to understand the substantial adult learning needs in Michigan and develop potential strategies for meeting those needs. This work is very much in keeping with the mission of the committee to improve opportunities for career advancement and financial stability for low-skilled and low-wage workers. The committee recognizes education, skills improvement and formal accreditation are of crucial importance as workers transition from low-wage work to family-sustaining careers.

As one part of the committee's work a workgroup of adult learning policy experts, leaders and teachers has been convened. In September the Adult Learning Workgroup will report out to the committee and make policy recommendations to strengthen the adult learning infrastructure in Michigan. The committee is deliberately using the phrase "adult learning infrastructure" rather than "adult education system" because one of its goals is to re-think the old silo-based "system" mentality in which different program areas didn't necessarily collaborate, even though they were doing many of the same things.

The Workgroup meets for the first time on March 18. Its 15 members include representatives of community colleges, Michigan Works! Agencies, local literacy councils, K-12-based high school completion and GED prep programs, DLEG's Office for Adult Education, employers, and others.

The Workgroup will be chaired by DLEG Deputy Director Andy Levin, and will receive staff support from Marcia Black-Watson of DLEG's Executive Office as lead staff, supported by Erica Nakfoor of DLEG's Office of Adult Education, the Michigan League for Human Services and the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce. The Low-Wage Worker Advancement Committee will continue to meet regularly, using its members' expertise in and concern for low-wage workers' needs to monitor the Workgroup's progress, review its policy recommendations and provide suggestions for Workgroup research and best practices review. We look forward to using the LWWAC as an umbrella group for adult learning improvement work in Michigan, of which the Adult Learning Workgroup is one central element.

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Demand is High for No Worker Left Behind Training

During its first six months of operation Governor Granholm's No Worker Left Behind Initiative (NWLBI) has clearly tapped into substantial interest and demand from workers facing transitions. NWLB provides up to two years of free tuition for unemployed and low income workers.

Already, more than 18,000 people have signed up for training under NWLB, with another 12,000 currently on waiting lists. More are expected as the program gains momentum and more individuals are made aware of the opportunity.

The initial interest is evidence that many Michigan workers understand their ability to enter new careers and realize good wages will be enhanced substantially if they obtain a post-secondary credential tied to a demand occupation. An estimated 70 percent of the fastest growing jobs in the state require a post-secondary degree. Even with the highest unemployment rate in the country, Michigan has about 23,000 unfilled jobs because of mismatches and job requirements.

CLEG COMMITTEE & WORKGROUP MEETINGS

MARCH 2008

8 – DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS. DON'T FORGET TO CHANGE YOUR CLOCKS!

10 – CLEG QUARTERLY MEETING @ LCC MTEC, LANSING

COMMITTEES SCHEDULED TO MEET FOLLOWING THE CLEG MEETING

- ENTREPRENEURSHIP
- INDUSTRY SECTOR
- GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS
- LOW WAGE WORKER ADVANCEMENT

18 – ADULT LEARNING WORKGROUP – 10:00 A.M. @ VICTOR BUILDING, LANSING

APRIL 2008

4 – MI NCRC WORKGROUP – 9:30 -11:30 A.M. @ VICTOR BUILDING, LANSING

7 – ENTREPRENEURSHIP COMMITTEE – 2:00-3:00 P.M. – TELECONFERENCE

8 – INDUSTRY SECTOR COMMITTEE – 1:00-3:00 P.M. @ AMERISURE MUTUAL INS. CO, SOUTH-FIELD

18 – LOW WAGE WORKER ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE – 10:00 A.M. – TELECONFERENCE

28 – CLEG EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – 1:30-3:30 P.M. @ OTTAWA BUILDING, LANSING

In her recent State of the State Address, Governor Granholm renewed support for No Worker Left Behind. In the audience was John Sternhagen, a Michigan resident who lost his job after 31 years in manufacturing when Electrolux closed its doors in Greenville. Sternhagen was retrained at Montcalm Community College and now works full time as an RN at Gratiot Medical Center, making almost double his old salary. He's a great example of why the Governor launched the NWLB initiative.

In her FY09 budget, Governor Granholm again proposed \$40 million in general fund support for No Worker Left Behind. Unfortunately, that proposal was not included in the final budget adopted by the Michigan legislature last year. This time, the Governor has proposed paying for NWLB with savings the state will realize from refinancing bonds.

A bipartisan legislative group, led by Rep. Richard Hammel (D-Flushing) and Senator Mark Jansen (R-Grand Rapids) is currently working with leadership in the Department of Labor and Economic Growth to develop a funding solution for No Worker Left Behind. The proposed \$40 million in funding is currently being considered as the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Economic Development considers DLEG's budget.

No Worker Left Behind operates today through the reframing of federal funding for worker transitions provided under the Workforce Investment Act, the Trade Adjustment Assistance Act and other federal sources.

The Michigan Works! Agencies and the state's Community Colleges are working in close partnership with DLEG in the development and operation of No Worker Left Behind.

For more information: <http://www.michigan.gov/nwlb>
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CLEG Industry Sector Committee Refines Health Care and Advanced Manufacturing Recommendations

At the September 2007 Quarterly CLEG Meeting, the Tackling Workforce Issues Facing Key Industry Sectors Committee, chaired by Derick Adams, vice president of Human Resources for Amerisure Mutual Insurance Co., presented a set of preliminary recommendations for helping employers in the Advanced Manufacturing and Health Care industry sectors succeed. Since that time, the committee has been working to refine the recommendations and define the expected outcomes and measures of success for the implementation of those recommendations. The committee has been using the Kellogg Foundation Logic Model to work through this process, identifying the resources, action steps, and short-term outputs and outcomes necessary to achieve success.

Following the prioritization of the recommendations, the committee has been working through the recommendation to "Bring a Positive Focus to Advanced Manufacturing Career Opportunities in Michigan." They are nearing completion of the Logic Modeling process for this recommendation. The next step will be to break the model up into an actionable implementation plan and present it to the full Council.

While working on Advanced Manufacturing, the committee has discovered many different definitions of advanced manufacturing exist. If everyone is to collaborate around advancing the industry, it is important to develop consensus on what advanced manufacturing means. The Industry Sector Committee has defined advanced manufacturing as "the incorporation of new technology, improved processes or management methods in manufacturing products through the systematic application of scientific and technical knowledge." This incorporates a number of definitions including those used by the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration and the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The committee will seek input from the full Council on this definition at a future date.

The Industry Sector Committee has also received a copy of the DVD "Making It In Michigan." The DVD was created about two years ago with some resources from MEDC; however, efforts to develop it as a series of broadcasts for a season on PBS were unsuccessful. The DVD fits very well with the committee's efforts to Bring a Positive Focus to Advanced Manufacturing Career Opportunities in Michigan. The committee will explore fundraising options for completing the "Making it In Michigan" DVD Project.

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CLEG Entrepreneurship Committee Surveys State Agencies/Conducts Focus Groups with Entrepreneurs

The CLEG entrepreneurship committee, chaired by Jack Litzenberg, program director, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, embraces a vision in which *the State of Michigan is "the place" to start and grow a business.* To support this vision, the committee has been exploring ways to further elevate emphasis on new business growth and development as a combined economic *and* workforce development strategy for the state.

CLEG COMMITTEE & WORKGROUP MEETINGS, (CONT.)

MAY 2008

5 – ENTREPRENEURSHIP
COMMITTEE – 2 :00-3:00
P.M. – TELECONFERENCE

9 – COMBINED MI NCRC
WORKGROUP,
INCREASING
EDUCATIONAL
ATTAINMENT, AND
ACCELERATING RE-
EMPLOYMENT
COMMITTEES – 9 :30-
11:30 A.M. @ VICTOR
BUILDING, LANSING

13 – INDUSTRY SECTOR
COMMITTEE – 1:00-3:00
@ AMERISURE
MUTUAL INS. CO,
SOUTHFIELD

27 – LOW WAGE WORKER
ADVANCEMENT
COMMITTEE – 9:30 A.M.
@ MI LEAGUE FOR
HUMAN SERVICES, LANS-
ING

JUNE 2008

9 – CLEG QUARTERLY
MEETING @ LCC MTEC,
LANSING
COMMITTEES SCHEDULED
TO MEET FOLLOWING THE
CLEG MEETING (PLEASE
RECONFIRM WITH
COMMITTEE CHAIR OR
STAFF)

- ACCELERATING
RE-EMPLOYMENT
- ENTREPRENEURSHIP
- INCREASING
EDUCATIONAL
ATTAINMENT
- INDUSTRY SECTOR
- GLOBAL
COMPETITIVENESS
- LOW WAGE WORKER
ADVANCEMENT

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CHANGE ANY EVENTS ON
THE CLEG CALENDAR

Committee members have drafted recommendations to help achieve this goal and now are testing ideas and concepts with actual entrepreneurs in their communities throughout the state. The committee also is mapping state government efforts to support small business. The primary objective is to encourage vertical and horizontal alignment of state initiatives inside state government and in communities with which state government partners.

Recent reports, documents and concepts the committee is referencing to support its work include:

- **Michigan Entrepreneurship Education Network** – *report on state higher education programs*
<https://secure.sbam.org/news.php?id=912>
- **University of Michigan College of Engineering Center for Entrepreneurial Programs** – *report from the Committee on Entrepreneurial Environment and Programs for Students (CEEPS)*
<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~ashwin/CEEPS-FinalReport.pdf>
- **"Cool Entrepreneurial Websites"** – DLEG MiRSA Community Partner Training
http://www.michigan.gov/documents/rsa/Cool_Entrepreneurial_Web_sites.doc_9.07_217014_7.pdf

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Related Links

Workforce Investment:

- **Michigan Works! Association** - <http://www.michiganworks.org>
- **Workforce3One** – *sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor/Employment and Training Administration (ETA), is an interactive communications and learning platform designed to build the capacity of the Workforce Investment System (WIS) to develop strategies that enable individuals to be successful in the 21st century economy.* <http://www.workforce3One.org>
- **National Governors Association Center for Best Practices – Social, Economic, and Workforce Programs** –
<http://www.nga.org/portal/site/nga/menuitem.8274ad9c70a7bd616adcbeeb501010a0/?vgnnextoid=b094d9b834420010VgnVCM1000001a01010aRCRD>
- **National Association of Workforce Boards** – <http://www.nawb.org>
- **National Association of State Workforce Agencies** – <http://www.naswa.org/>

Research & Reports:

- **Michigan Future** – *Michigan's Transition to a Knowledge-Based Economy: First Annual Progress Report*; www.michiganfuture.org/Reports/ProgressReport2008Final.pdf
- **Center for Michigan** – *The 2008 Michigan Scorecard: Benchmarks for Transformation*; <http://www.thecenterformichigan.net/blog/a-new-michigan-scorecard>
- **Center for Automotive Research** – *Beyond the Big Leave: The future of US Automotive Human Resources*; http://www.cargroup.org/documents/BreakfastBriefingPresentationFeb2008_000.pdf
<http://www.cargroup.org/documents/BeyondtheBigLeave.pdf>
- **PHI Michigan** – *Opportunity Partnership & Empowerment Network: A case study of an effective employee retention project*
<http://www.directcareclearinghouse.org/download/OPEN%20Report%20final.pdf>

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